

Message Text

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SUBJECT : MONDALE VISIT--BIOGRAPHIC DATA FOR WOLFGANG LUEDER

REF: A) USBERLIN 143, B) STATE 7810

1. WOLFGANG LUEDER, 39, BECAME MAYOR OF BERLIN
(I.E., DEPUTY TO THE GOVERNING MAYOR) IN JULY 1976,
WHEN THE THE TEHN MAYOR HERMANN OXFORT WAS FORCED TO
RESIGN FOLLOWING THE ESCAPE BY FOUR TERRORISTS FROM
A BERIN JAIL NOMINALLY UNDER OXFORT'S AUTHORITY.
LUEDER CONTINUES TO SERVE AS SENATOR (MINISTER)
FOR ECONOMICS IN BERLIN'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC (SPD)/
FREE DEMOCRATIC (FDP) COALITION GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS
FORMED IN APRIL, 1975. LUEDER, AS CHAIRMAN OF THE
BERLIN FDP, WAS THE NATURAL CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED
OXFORT AS MAYOR BUT WAS NOT THE MOST POPULAR CHOICE
AT THE TIME. THERE HAD ALSO BEEN SOME CRITICISM
IN APRIL 1975 WHEN HE WAS APPOINTED SENATOR FOR
ECONOMICS BECAUSE LUEDER A LAWYER BY TRAINING AND DIVORCE
COURT JUDGE BY PROFESSION, HAD VIRTUALLY NO
EXPERIENCE IN ECONOMICS. UNLIKE HIS OUTGOING
PRDECESSOR OXFORT LUEDER HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A
COLORLESS (SOME WOULD SAY THAT HE IS NOT PRESUPPOSING)
PERSON, WHICH WORKS TO HIS DISADVANTAGE AS BERLIN'S
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 USBERL 00157 141809Z

NUMBER TWO PUBLIC FIGURE, HE HAS NONETHELESS WON
IN RECENT MONTHS INCREASING RESPECT AND ADMIRATION
FOR HIS QUIET, DIRECT AND NONONSENSE APPROACH IN
DEALING WITH PROBLEMS. HE ALSO HS A REPUTATION
OF SURROUNDING HIMSELF WITH COMPETENT ADVISORS AND
FOR FOLLOWING THEIR ADVICE.

2. LUEDER ROSE TO POLITICAL PROMINENCE AS THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN OF THE YOUNG DEMOCRATS, THE YOUTH ARM OF THE FDP. HE WAS DEFEATED IN HIS FIRST EFFORT TO WIN ELECTION TO THE BERLIN HOUSE IN 1971 BUT SHORTLY THEREAFTER WAS ELECTED TO REPLACE HERMANN OXFORT AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BERLIN CHAPTER OF THE FREE DEMOCRATS WHEN EN OXFORT DECLINED TO SEEK RE-ELECTION TO THAT POST IN ORDER TO DEVOTE MORE TIME TO HIS PRIVATE LAW PRACTICE. LUEDER WAS ELECTED TO THE BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN 1975. LUEDER HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE FDP'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD SINCE 1968. ORIGINALLY CONSIDERED A MEMBER OF THE FDP'S FDP'S LEFT WING, HE HAS MOVED CLOSER TO THE PARTY'S CENTER SINCE ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITIES AS SENATOR AND MAYOR. DUE TO HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THE LEFT WING OF BERLIN'S LEFT WING FDP PARTY, HIS NOMINATION AS SENATOR FOR ECONOMICS CAUSED SERIOUS CONCERN TO MEMBERS OF THE BERLIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WHO VIEWED HIM WITH SUSPICION. NOW, HOWEVER, CHAMBER HOSTILITY TOWARD HIM HAS DIMINISHED. A STRONG SUPPORTER OF THE COALITION WITH THE FDP, LUEDER EMPHATICALLY REJECTED A PROPOSAL IN MARCH 1976 THAT THE FDP CONSIDER JOINING IN COALITION WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION IN BERLIN.

3. BORN IN CELLE, A SMALL TOWN SOUTH OF HAMBURG, LUEDER RECEIVED A DEGREE IN LAW FROM THE FREE UNIVERISYT OF BERLIN IN 1961. ACTIVE IN POLITICS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 USBERL 00157 141809Z

AS A STUDENT, HE WAS AMEMBER OF THE LIBERAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION, SERVING AS ITS FEDERAL CHAIRMAN IN 1965. LUEDER JOINED THE FDP IN 1962 AND WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE BERLIN YOUNG DEMOCRATS (1967) BEFORE SERVING AS NATIONAL CHAIRMAN (1968-70).

4. LUEDER IS FRIENDLY TOWARDS AMERICANS AND THE UNITED STATES. HE VISITED THE US FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEPTEMBER 1976 IN AN EFFORT TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT BY US FIRMS IN WEST BERLIN, AND TO PROMOTE WEST BERLIN AS AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER, PARTICULARLY BY DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE CITY'S LARGE NEW CONGRESS HALL DUE FOR COMPLETION IN 1978. LUEDER UNDERSTANDS ENGLISH IF IT IS SPOKEN SLOWLY BUT SPEAKS IT ONLY WITH EXTREME DIFFICULTY. SENATOR LUEDER WAS RECENTLY DIVORCED; HE HAS A NINE-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER.
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